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7 October 1972

Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

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CAMBODIA: Lon Nol and Sirik Matak still trying to
resolve differences. [REDACTED]

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25X1

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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CAMBODIA: LON NOL AND FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SIRIK MATAK ARE STILL TRYING TO RESOLVE THEIR SERIOUS POLITICAL DIFFERENCES.

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THE TWO CAMBODIAN LEADERS MET BRIEFLY ON 5 OCTOBER AND AGREED--IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A TEMPORARY COMPROMISE--THAT THE QUESTION OF APPOINTING A VICE-PRESIDENT SHOULD BE PUT OFF FOR NOW. THE PRESIDENT CLAIMED THAT IF HE SHOULD NAME MATAK TO FILL THAT POST IT WOULD CAUSE SOME "SPECTACULAR RESIGNATIONS" IN THE CABINET. LON NOL ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT MATAK WOULD REMAIN AS A SPECIAL COUNSELOR TO THE PRESIDENT.

LON NOL SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD THE US CHARGE THAT HE HAS INSTRUCTED OFFICERS OF THE PRO-GOVERNMENT SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY TO MAKE FRESH EFFORTS TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH MATAK'S REPUBLICAN PARTY. IN ADDITION, LON NOL INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO APPOINT SEVERAL OF MATAK'S CLOSE ASSOCIATES TO EXECUTIVE POSITIONS--INCLUDING ONE CABINET POST--IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT THAT HE IS TRYING TO FORM. MATAK LATER TOLD THE CHARGE THAT HE WOULD "MAKE EVERY EFFORT" TO TRY TO MAKE THE PARTY TALKS SUCCEED.

THE APPARENTLY AMIABLE MEETING BETWEEN LON NOL AND MATAK--THEIR FIRST PRIVATE ENCOUNTER IN SEVERAL WEEKS--CAME AT A PARTICULARLY OPPORTUNE TIME. LON NOL RECENTLY HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY IRRITATED OVER MATAK'S NUMEROUS REFUSALS TO GIVE HIM A CLEAR-CUT DECISION ON THE VICE-PRESIDENCY. FOR HIS PART, MATAK HAD BEEN TAKING AN EXTREMELY HARD AND BITTER LINE TOWARD THE PRESIDENT BEFORE THEIR MEETING.

25X1

ALTHOUGH THE MEETING MAY HAVE HELPED TO CLEAR THE AIR SOMEWHAT BETWEEN LON NOL AND MATAK, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO FASHION A GENUINE POLITICAL

7 Oct 72

Central Intelligence Bulletin

3

25X1

25X1

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RAPPROCHEMENT. SEVERAL KEY SOCIO-REPUBLICAN LEADERS WHO ARE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE TALKS WITH THE REPUBLICANS ARE QUITE HOSTILE TOWARD THAT PARTY, AND EVEN MORE SO TOWARD MATAK. THEY PROBABLY WILL DO ALL THEY CAN TO SABOTAGE THE TALKS TO ENSURE THAT THEY WILL HAVE A DOMINANT POLITICAL POSITION IN WHATEVER NEW GOVERNMENT FINALLY EMERGES FROM THE CURRENT MANEUVERING. IF THAT SHOULD HAPPEN, IT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO IMPAIR LON NOL'S ABILITY TO GOVERN MORE EFFECTIVELY AND DEEPEN THE SENSE OF POLITICAL UNREST THAT NOW PREVAILS IN PHNOM PENH.

25X1

7 Oct 72

Central Intelligence Bulletin

4

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25X1

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